

ON BOARD POWER

► BY PETER A. ROBSON ► PHOTOS BY NEIL RABINOWITZ



Bracewell 41

Look familiar? It is, but with many improvements.

▶ **WHILE IT USED TO BE** called the Camano 41, the builder has made a number of significant changes and renamed it the Bracewell 41. The Camano 41 was first built in 2006 by then owners Brad and Jasyln Miller who had acquired Delta-based Camano Marine from former owner Bob Warman in 1997. Ten years previously, Warman had designed the Camano Troll 31, which became hugely popular. He went on to build more than 250 of them. The Millers wanted to meet the demand for a larger vessel and so they came

up with the Camano 41, which incorporated many of the design features of the 31.

Only a handful of 41s were built and in 2007, the Millers sold the assets of the company to Lance Bracewell, an established and well-respected builder. His company, Bracewell Boatworks, which also has a significant commercial vessel refit and repair component, has turned out many fine semi-production yachts from its yard on Shelter Island in Richmond. Bracewell acquired the molds for both Camanos and subsequently sold the molds for the 31 to an American company, Camano Yachts America. (It is interesting to note that Lance Bracewell helped Warman build the original plug for the 31.) Bracewell kept the molds for the 41

and is now building his modified version on a semi-production basis.

Design and Construction One of the design features that made the Camano 31 so popular was its unique “Keelform” hull design. It was a revolutionary combination of displacement and planing hull. Forward the hull is semi-displacement, while aft the hull flattens out to a planing hull with hard chines. It had a full keel, which lowered the centre of gravity and allowed the engine to be mounted lower in the hull, which meant more space above and a lower shaft angle (which provides more direct thrust and better all-round efficiency). The result is a hull that can cruise efficiently ▶



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and comfortably at trawler speeds of 8 or so knots, but achieve top speeds of 15-plus knots—with a single engine.

The fiberglass hull is laid up by hand with solid glass below the waterline. For strengthening, a molded structural stringer system ties it all together. Above the waterline, the hull sides and decks are closed-cell foam cored. The deckhouse and deck are a single mold while the flybridge is built separately. The “shoebox” hull-deck joint is fastened mechanically and glassed from the inside.

On Deck Bracewell has done little to change the exterior look of the 41 (after all, if it isn't broken...). The overall look remains beefy, with a trawler-style bow, gently sweeping sheerline, rounded transom, large deckhouse and flybridge. The changes Bracewell has made are subtle, but definite improvements. The flybridge deck has been extended aft to completely cover the compact cockpit, which means it's possible to use the space when it's raining. This also allows more deck space on

↑ **Above** The Bracewell has both a master suite forward and cozy guest berth amidships to port—a definite improvement over the old Camano layout.

➔ **Right** The teak flooring and dark paneled woodwork contrast the off-white, ultraleather upholstery, giving a rich feel.



the flybridge and room for a larger dinghy and other cruising gear. The window profile has changed to accommodate a starboard side door and is quite pleasing. A bigger, stronger and better looking radar/flag mast has replaced the old folding mast, which means more room for electronic goodies. For ease of maintenance, there is no external woodwork to varnish, paint or oil. On the flybridge, a hydraulic davit makes it easy

to launch the dinghy. In the cockpit, the owner had a hydraulic prawn puller and electric downriggers added, making the cockpit a fisherman's dream. The cockpit also features a second steering station, with throttle, thruster and autopilot (instead of a steering wheel), and a flat panel multi-function screen, primarily used as a depth sounder when fishing. There is a huge storage area under the cockpit sole.

Interior A sturdy watertight door separates the cockpit from the saloon. Inside, the large windows mean there is plenty of light and good visibility all round. Teak flooring and dark paneled woodwork contrast with the off-white, ultraleather upholstery, giving the interior a rich, comfortable feel. The fit and finish throughout is excellent. Aft and to starboard an L-shaped settee is fronted by a large teak dining/coffee table. The settee folds down to make a double berth. Forward along the starboard side is a large, flat-topped storage unit that contains the microwave and icemaker and a number of drawers. It butts up against the lower steering station with a double helm seat. The helm station is nicely laid out with a 15-inch Furuno NavNet multi-function unit (a second is on the flybridge), a PC-based chart plotter and all the standard gauges and controls, including a FLIR infrared imaging system. A panel on the overhead houses a bank of radios and other electronics including a Class A AIS system.

On the portside aft is an angled shelf unit with a flat screen TV and just forward is a well-thought-out Corian-topped desk unit the owner had installed as an office away from the office. Drawers underneath hold assorted office equipment such as a scanner and printer for his laptop. Forward to port is a U-shaped galley with propane oven and upright Nova Cool fridge and freezer unit.

Belowdecks have been redesigned to allow for two staterooms, which is a big improvement over the original layout that saw a single stateroom in the bow. To port is a cozy guest stateroom with double berth and a closet for the stacked washer and dryer. To starboard is the head with a separate shower. Forward is an island queen berth with bench seating on either side. There are a number of opening hatches and portholes for good ventilation below.

Systems Power is provided by a single Volvo D6 435-horsepower 5.5-litre diesel. One of the great features of the 41 is its hydraulic system. It does much more than most hydraulic setups, powering the steering, the alternator, the windlass, the bow and stern thrusters, and the dinghy davit. The owner wanted all the bells and whistles for comfortable and safe cruising with his wife and children, and he certainly got them. The list is extensive, but includes ▶

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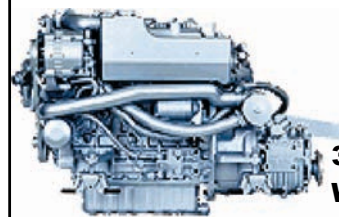


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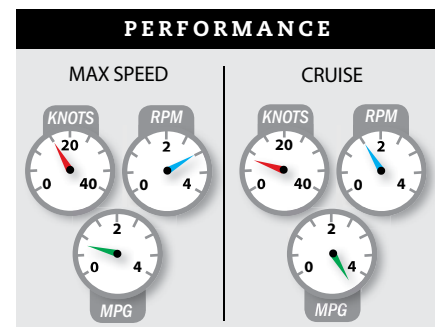
generator, watermaker, hydronic heating, underwater lights and camera, video cameras throughout, a security and alarm system connected to the owner's computer and cellphone, 16 speaker Bose sound system, TrackVision sat TV, three 32-inch flat screen TVs—the list goes on and on. This is the best equipped boat of its size this writer has ever seen.

Underway As is typical of today's electronically-controlled common rail diesels, the six cylinder Volvo fired up nicely and quietly with no smoke. The bow and stern thrusters made it easy to manoeuvre out of the owner's slip in Pender Harbour. The owner explained how he'd brought the boat across the Strait of Georgia from Schooner Cove on a stormy day with massive seas and the boat handled it all comfortably.

As we motored out of the harbour, it was soon apparent that the 41 gets excellent gas mileage at displacement cruising speeds. At 1,500 rpm we were making 7 knots while using 1.6 gph (4.4 miles per gallon). Between 1,700 and 1,800 rpm, we could feel some slight cavitation from the prop. The owner felt this may be due to the positioning of the optional stern thruster affecting the smooth flow of water over

↑ **Above** The L-shaped settee in the main saloon folds down into a double berth.

the prop, but the cavitation wasn't always there and also depended on fuel load and sea conditions. At 2,000 rpm, our speed was a comfortable 8.4 knots, yet we were burning only 4.5 gph (1.8 mpg). At 2,500 rpm we were making 10 knots while burning 8.5 gph (1.2 mpg). At this speed, the bow started to rise, impairing visibility slightly as the boat began to exceed displacement speed. At 3,000 rpm, our speed was 11.8 knots while burning 13.5 gph (0.9 mpg). Poking around down below during high speed running showed no vibration or rattling, and engine noise in the saloon was low enough to allow normal conversa-



tions. The motion in turns and swells was very comfortable, rolling was minimal in cross seas and the boat tracked and turned well. At 3,500 rpm we were making a top speed of 15 knots and burning 21 gph (0.7 mpg) with the bow remaining slightly elevated. When Pacific Yachting tested an early Camano 41, top speed was just over 17 knots, though the engine was larger (500-hp turbocharged Yanmar) and that vessel didn't have the additional weight of this owner's many add-ons.

As can be seen, the most economical cruising speeds are between 6 and 8 knots. However, if the need arises, the 41 can get home in a hurry, albeit with significantly reduced fuel efficiency.

Concluding Remarks The Bracewell 41 is a very well-built, sturdy and fuel efficient cruiser well suited to West Coast climate and sea conditions—and it's built right here in British Columbia. It comes equipped with an extensive cruise-ready package that includes a Furuno navigation package, generator, hydronic heating, a washer and dryer, a dinghy and lots more. Base price is \$672,500. ☎

THE SPECS

► BRACEWELL 41

LOA	12.5 m	41'
Beam	4.3 m	14'
Draft	1.2 m	3' 9"
Displ.	12,700 kg	28,000 lbs
Fuel	1,500 L	400 gal
Water	380 L	100 gal
Holding	190 L	50 gal
Power	Single 435-hp Volvo D6, 5.5-litre diesel	

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